

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this Foreign Relations Authorization Act. It provides the necessary resources for the State Department to fully carry out its core mission--U.S. diplomacy based on smart power as advanced by President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton--from authorizing funding for the U.N., for peacekeeping operations, for international organizations to establishing a critical study abroad program and doubling the size of the Peace Corps. This bill provides critical support for the State Department in helping to restore our image around the world--all critical tools for U.S. diplomatic power.

One of my particular interests is in looking for ways to increase and to enhance study abroad programs. Having studied overseas myself in undergrad, I am very pleased with the inclusion of the Paul Simon Study Abroad Act. American students who live and study in other countries not only gain invaluable experience, but they serve as some of America's best ambassadors.

I want to thank the chairman for including this provision as well as my amendment, which will ensure that existing study abroad programs have equal access to grant funding so that they can expand their already successful missions. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your work on this bill. It will make a substantial difference in our diplomatic efforts to reengage the world.